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Letters about Literature  
Competition level 1  
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January 2, 2012

Dear Ray Bradbury,

Our culture is built very carefully. It's like a hill piled up over time. The many layers build up around us. It changes us and shapes us. It inspires what we do, our writing, our reading and everyday behavior. Books are an important part of that.

Reading Fahrenheit 451 showed me how different our world was fifty years ago and how quickly our books are disappearing today. Already we have the Nook tablet and other electronics where our books can be purchased and read. No one relishes the papery crinkle of the pages of the book as you read. No one thinks of the story renewed each time you open the book. No one takes pleasure in an old worn paperback or a rough hard copy.

Books are my life. I enjoy them and rejoice when I find a new story. Then when I read Fahrenheit 451 it pained me at the emptiness of the people. Without books we are broken and lost. I think you understood that point somehow back in the 1950s.

The most horrible thing to me though was that they enjoyed their work. The sick smile on their face as they watched the fire ignite and blaze. But then came the sadness. You see how the weariness of burning books came down on them. Books are supposed to be good and excitement, not bad things that ruin us.

I learned how we read with Dr. Seuss; I learned why we read with Harry Potter. Books are important to me in a way that when I go into a bookstore I just stop for a minute and smell the fresh book scent. I can spend hours in a bookstore just looking at one book.

All I can say is thank you for writing this and letting us get a glimpse into the possible future. You are a gifted writer and I am glad that this story was published. I hope you realize you have sparked a fire in me that cannot be put out.

Sincerely,  
Juna Hartzler